

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2 AND 3)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJ: THE TRANSITION: VIEWS OF THE FPD AND GIL ROBLES

SUMMARY: GIL ROBLES, LEADER OF THE FPD, A MODERATE "ILLEGAL" OPPOSITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, STRESSED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR JUAN CARLOS WAS TO MOVE RAPIDLY TO LEGALIZE POLITICAL PARTIES. FPD STRONGLY OPPOSED COMMUNISTS, BUT ON GROUNDS OF BOTH PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGY, FELT THEY SHOULD BE LEGALIZED AND PUT OUT INTO THE OPEN, ALTHOUGH THE RECOGNIZED TRANSITION GOVT MIGHT FIND ITSELF UNABLE TO DO THIS. A UNION OF THE FIVE ILLEGAL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUPINGS SEEMED INEVITABLE, BUT HE SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF UNION WITH THE REGIME CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS OF SILVA MUNOZ' UDE. THE SUPPORT OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE INVALUABLE FOR THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN. IN HIS JUDGMENT, ARIAS MIGHT, AFTER ALL, BE THE BEST MAN TO LEAD THE TRANSITION.
END SUMMARY

1. ON OCT 31 AMBASSADOR HAD LUNCH AT RESIDENCE WITH JOSE MARIA GIL ROBLES, SPANISH CATHOLIC LEADER DURING SECOND REPUBLIC AND CURRENT HEAD OF ILLEGAL OPPOSITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC
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PARTY (NOW CALLING ITSELF "FEDERACION POPULAR DEMOCRATICA"),

AND OTHER YOUNGER FPD LEADERS, INCLUDING HIS SON AND HEIR-APPARENT, JOSE MARIA, JR.

2. GIL ROBLES STRESSED THAT WHILE THE TRANSITION PERIOD WOULD TAKE SOME TIME, JUAN CARLOS' PERIOD OF MAXIMUM POLITICAL CLOUT LAY AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS REGIME AND HE WOULD HAVE TO ACT WITH A MIXTURE OF SPEED AND PRUDENCE TO SET SPAIN ON THE PATH TOWARD DEMOCRACY BEFORE HE LOST POLITICAL CAPITAL. THE KEY TO THIS WOULD BE THE LEGALIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES OF ALL STRIPES THROUGH NEW LEGISLATION, QUITE FEASIBLE UNDER THE CURRENT CONSTITUTIONAL SET UP. IN THIS WAY, THE VARIOUS OPPOSITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC, SOCIALIST AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GROUPINGS COULD BEGIN TO OPERATE FREELY AND TO OVERCOME THE COMMUNIST ADVANTAGE IN LABOR AND OTHER SECTORS BECAUSE OF THEIR GREATER SKILL IN CLANDESTINE ORGANIZATION.

3. GIL ROBLES INDICATED THAT THE FPD WOULD ALWAYS OPPOSE THE COMMUNISTS AND VIOLENCE PRONE-EXTREMISTS, BUT WOULD CONTINUE STRONGLY TO FAVOR LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY ON GROUNDS OF PRINCIPLE AND STRATEGY. WERE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION GROUPS LIKE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE SOCIALIST PSOE - WITH WHOM THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAD CLOSE RELATIONS - TO FAVOR KEEPING THE COMMUNISTS ILLEGAL THEY WOULD BE OPEN TO DAMAGING CRITICISM FROM THE COMMUNISTS. THE PCE WOULD COVER ITSELF WITH THE MANTLE OF DEMOCRATIC PURITY AND CHARGE THAT DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION HAD SOLD OUT TO THE ANCIENT REGIME. ALSO CLANDESTINITY FAVORS THE PCE, ONLY BY GETTING IT OUT IN THE OPEN WHERE ITS POSITIONS ARE EXPOSED TO SCRUTINY, CAN ITS BASICALLY SMALL POPULAR BACKING BE DEMONSTRATED. AT THE SAME TIME HE RECOGNIZED THE TRANSITION GOVT MIGHT BE CONSTRAINED BY RIGHTIST SENTIMENT TO CONTINUE TO PROSCRIBE THE PCE. IN THIS CASE THE FPD WOULD OPPOSE THE NEW GOS ON THIS POINT, BUT ENCOURAGE IT IN THE MEASURE THAT IT OTHERWISE PROCEEDED TOWARD DEMOCRATIZATION.

4. IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC SITUATION IN SPAIN, GIL ROBELS SAID THAT THE FIVE GROUPS (HIS OWN FPD, THE IDC OF RUIZ GIMENEZ, AND THREE CONFIDENTIAL

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REGIONAL GROUPINGS FROM VALENCIA, CATALONIA AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY) COLLABORATED CLOSELY, AND THAT SOME FORM OF UNION WAS INEVITABLE. THE GROUNDWORK HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED AT A CLANDESTINE CONGRESS OF THE FIVE GROUPS IN VALENCIA EARLIER THIS YEAR. THESE FIVE GROUPS WERE ALL RECOGNIZED BY THE EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION. EUROPEAN SUPPORT, SUCH AS THE SEMINAR GIVEN FOR 30 SPANISH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS BY THE GERMANS IN EARLY OCTOBER IN WEST BERLIN, WAS

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ON THE PRACTICAL AS WELL AS SYMBOLIC LEVEL.

5. ON THE OTHER HAND, GIL ROBLES SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF UNION WITH THE UDE (THE POLITICAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION LED BY SILVA MUNOA). THEY WERE CHRISTIANS BUT NOT VERY DEMOCRATIC HAVING COME FROM THE HEART OF THE REGIME. LATER THE YOUNGER GIL ROBLES EXPANDED ON HIS FATHER'S REMARKS. THE UDE LEADERSHIP, SILVA, OSORIO, ENRIQUE DE LA MATA, ET AL, WERE DECENT MEN, BUT HAD A REGIME IMAGE. DOWN THE PIKE, MANY OF THE ELEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UDE WOULD LIKELY JOIN A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY BUT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY, IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE UDE LEADERS TO GO INTO SOME KIND OF CONSERVATIVE PARTY. IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS TO RECRUIT CADRES AND FUTURE LEADERSHIP OUT OF THE UNIVERSITIES IF THEY CARRIED THE BURDEN OF SILVA'S IMAGE.

6. SO FAR AS COOPERATION WITH OTHER DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION GROUPS WAS CONCERNED, THE FPD - UNLIKE RUIZ GIMENEZ' GROUP - HAD NOT JOINED THE "PLATAFORMA DE CONVERGENCIA" BECAUSE OF THE INCLUSION OF TWO SMALL EXTREME LEFT-WING GROUPS (ORT AND MCE) WHICH DID NOT ESCHEW THE POSSIBILITY OF VIOLENCE. HE EXPECTED THEY WOULD DROP OUT SHORTLY, AND THE FPD WOULD PROBABLY JOIN. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE "JUNTA DEMOCRATICA" WAS COMMUNIST-MANIPULATED AND THE FPD WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. I ENCOURAGED THAT ATTITUDE SAYING WE WOULD VIEW COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN A FUTURE SPANISH GOVT AS VERY UNHEALTHY AND THAT WE OURSELVES WOULD HAVE NO HIGH-LEVEL CONTACT EITHER WITH THE PCE OR THOSE NON-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS WHO ARE ALLIED WITH THE PCE IN THE "JUNTA". WE FAVOR A MORE OPEN AND PLURALISTIC SPAIN AND TO THAT END WILL MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH ALL DEMOCRATIC GROUPS.

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7. GIL ROBLES INDICATED TO ME THAT, AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE, ARIAS MIGHT BE THE BEST MAN TO LEAD A TRANSITION GOVT THAT BROUGHT ON FREE PLAY OF POLITICAL FORCES THROUGH DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS. ALL THE OTHER WOULD-BE PRIME MINISTERS HAD SERIOUS DRAWBACKS, INCLUDING THE AUTHORITARIAN FIGURE OF FRAGA.

8. THE YOUNGER GIL ROBLES REMARKED THAT THEY HAD HEARD DISTURBING REPORTS OF A "AMBIGUOUS" MOVEMENT WITHIN THE MILITARY SUGGESTING THAT THE TRANSITION GOVT SHOULD GOVERN FOR A YEAR (INSTEAD OF THE SIX MONTHS APERTURISTAS AND OPPOSITION FIGURES ALIKE AGREED ON) BEFORE ENTERING INTO AN ELECTORAL PROCESS. THIS SEEMED LARGELY A CREATION OF YOUNGER OFFICERS, SOME LINKED TO THE UMD ("UNION MILITAR DEMOCRATICA",

THE AMORPHOUS BUT RELATIVELY SMALL DISSENTING GROUP COMPRISED OF YOUNGER MILITARY OFFICERS). THESE PEOPLE WERE NOT RADICAL LEFTISTS, BUT IT WAS UNWISE TO THINK OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT - YOUNG OR OLD - AS NECESSARILY BULWARKS OF DEMOCRACY. THIS SORT OF MOVEMENT COULD EASILY CONVERGE INTO ANTI-DEMOCRATIC LINES - NOT A PORTUGAL BUT, BUT OVER THE LONG RUN, A PERU.

9. DESPITE THE HISTORY OF PERSONALIST LEADERSHIP AND FRAGMENTATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION, THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY HERE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BROAD BASED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT, JUST AS THERE IS FOR A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/SOCIALIST MOVEMENT.
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